

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification as follows. Additions are shown underlined and deletions are ~~struck through~~.

In the paragraph beginning on page 14, line 19:

In one embodiment of the present invention, the dilator is preferably notched 152 near its distal end 151 around its entire circumference. This notch 152 provides a seat and guide point for the tapered distal tips of the two halves 102a, 102b of the retractor body, such that when the retractor 100 is closed upon the dilator 150, the sharp distal tip of the retractor body 112 is buried in the notch 152 of the dilator. This forms a smooth transition between the dilator 150 and retractor 100 (FIGURE 12). As will be explained more fully below, when the guidewire 144 is inserted through the dilator 150 and the dilator 150 is then inserted through the retractor 100, (FIGURES 12-13), the dilator 150 lies securely within the interior circular channel 108 (FIGURE 9) running the length of the retractor body 102.

In the paragraph beginning on page 17, line 3:

The outer lumen of the dual-lumen catheter 340 surrounds the inner lumen 342, and also extends from the proximal end of the catheter 344 to the distal end 346. Near the distal end of the catheter 346, at least one indicator hole 352 is positioned in the outer wall of the catheter 340. The indicator hole 352 provides fluid communication between the area outside of the catheter 340 and the outer lumen. The outer surface of the catheter 354 surrounding the indicator hole 352 is preferably raised, acting as a stop. Preferably, the distance between the indicator hole 352 and the proximal end of the raised surface of the retractor 354, is approximately the same as the thickness of the wall of the femoral artery. As will be explained below, the retractor 300 is first mounted on the distal end of the catheter, and positioned such that the distal tip of the retracting portion 310 stops at a guide point just proximal to the raised surface 354, about 0.5 mm proximal to the indicator hole 352. This assures that the distal tip of the retracting portion 310 will be properly positioned inside the patient's body at the site of the wound in the artery.

In the paragraph beginning on page 22, line 17:

While the retractor-dilator assembly 101 is advanced into the patient's body, suction is continuously applied via the syringe 158 or other means of negative pressure (FIGURE 13) to the dilator 150. At the moment the indicator holes 154 enter the lumen of the femoral artery, blood is aspirated into the syringe 158, indicating that the dilator 150 has been inserted through the puncture

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site into the femoral artery. Thus, the distal tip of the retractor 112, still buried within the notch 152 in the dilator 150, is located just proximal or outside the artery wall at the site of the puncture wound and the indicator holes 154 in the dilator 150 are located just distal or inside the artery lumen. The artery wall is thus disposed in the area 153 between the notch 152 and the holes 154.